

A Chronicle of Holocaust Revisionism

Part 2: Confronting Ulysses (1950-1955)

[Thomas Kues](#)

This is the second part of an article series forming a chronicle of Holocaust revisionism from the first years of the Post-War era up to the present. In the first part, we saw that during the first five years following the Second World War, there appeared a number of articles disputing the Six Million figure, while writings skeptical of the gas chamber allegations were rare. In my commentary I offered an explanation for this circumstance, namely that the technical details of the alleged mass murders had been given very little court time at IMT Nuremberg and subsequent trials, and that witness accounts of gas chambers publicly available in the West were few in number. As a result, early revisionist writers would have felt little need to address the issue of the reality of the gas chambers, and naturally also the question whether the alleged gassings were technically feasible or not. It would take a former concentration camp inmate and his courageous confrontation with gas chamber claims he knew to be untrue to put focus on the supposed weapon of mass murder. His name was Paul Rassinier, and the publication of his book *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse* in 1950 signaled the real beginning of the gas chamber controversy. In this second part of the chronicle, his pioneering revisionist activity and its repercussions will be detailed.

The author once again wishes to thank Richard Widmann and Jean Plantin for their assistance with locating many of the sources.

1950

Background

On May 8 former Sobibór SS Erich Bauer, accused of having been in charge of the alleged homicidal gas chambers at that camp, is given a death sentence by a West Berlin court. The sentence is later commuted to life in prison. On August 25, a Frankfurt court sentences former Sobibór SS Hubert Gomerski to life imprisonment, while another former guard, Johann Klier, is released. Those early trials of former *Aktion Reinhardt* personnel goes virtually unmentioned in the press.

Events

October. Paul Rassinier's book *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse: regard sur la littérature concentrationnaire* (The Lies of Ulysses: a look at the concentration camp literature), is published by Éditions Bressanes (Bourgen-Bresse), with a preface by Albert Paraz (1899-1957). Rassinier (1906-1967) was a socialist and pacifist who during the war had been imprisoned in the concentration camps Buchenwald and Dora-Mittelbau. Following the war, Rassinier reacted strongly against the lies and exaggerations in the writings of former fellow inmates Abbé Renard and Eugen Kogon. In *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*, Rassinier denies the existence of homicidal gas chambers at Buchenwald, which had been alleged by Renard and others, and likewise disputes the existence of such installations at Bergen-Belsen, Dachau and Mauthausen. At the time of writing, however, Rassinier believed that the gas chambers rumors had some basis in reality, and that some gassings may have been carried out in Auschwitz and other camps in the east, while suggesting that such murderous actions were the work

“of one or two insane people among the SS, and of one or two concentration camp bureaucracies they were trying to please; or vice versa, by one or two concentration camp bureaucracies, with the complicity, purchased or not, of one or two particularly sadistic SS men”

On the other hand, Rassinier points out that there is no reason to regard the gas chamber witnesses of Auschwitz as a priori more reliable than the false gas chamber witnesses of Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen.

December. Maurice Bardèche’s book *Nuremberg II ou les Faux-Monnayeurs* (Nuremberg, or the counterfeiters) is published by Les Sept Couleurs (Paris). Bardèche criticizes the legal framework of IMT Nuremberg, the reliance on evidence presented by the USSR, the hypocrisy regarding war crimes perpetrated by the Allies, and the treatment of witnesses and accused at Nuremberg as well as in connection with the *Einsatzgruppen*, I.G. Farben, Dachau and Malmédy trials. Bardèche had read Rassinier’s books *Passage de la Ligne* and *Le Mensonge d’Ulysse* and quotes extensively from them, while criticizing as unrealistic Rassinier’s suggestion that the authorities in Berlin did not know exactly what went on in the camps. In addition to affirming Rassinier’s rejection of the Buchenwald gas chamber allegations, he expresses doubt regarding the alleged gassings at Dachau, and also characterizes Höss’ statement regarding mass gassings of Jews at Auschwitz as “surrounded by plenty of astonishing circumstances”.^[1]

Edmond Michelet initiates a lawsuit against Rassinier based on allegedly defamatory contents of *Le Mensonge d’Ulysse* but soon withdraws it.

Undated. Dr. Franz J. Scheidl reportedly finishes writing the first manuscript to his multi-volume work *Geschichte Der Verfemung Deutschlands* (“The History of the Defamation of Germany”) but fails to find a publisher willing to take the risk of publishing a work of revisionist nature. The manuscript will remain unpublished until 1967.

Historical context

In January, [President] Truman orders development of hydrogen bomb. Kuomintang troops surrender in mainland China. In February, Senator McCarthy accuses US Department of State of harboring 205 Communists. In April, Jordan annexes the West Bank, Britain formally recognizes Israel. On June 25 North Korean troops cross the 38th parallel, marking the beginning of the Korean War. In October, Communist China invades Tibet.

1951

Background

On January 15, Ilse Koch “The Witch of Buchenwald” is sentenced to life imprisonment by a West German court. On March 3, former Treblinka SS Josef Hirtreiter is sentenced to life imprisonment by a Frankfurt court. The March and April issues of Jean-Paul Sartre’s magazine *Le Temps Modernes* presents 58 pages of translated extracts from Miklos Nyiszli’s book in his alleged experiences in Auschwitz. Historian Léon Poliakov’s book *Le Bréviaire de la haine. Le IIIe Reich et les Juifs* is published by Calmann-Lévy, Paris.

Events

May 9. Three organizations of former resistance members have libel charges pressed against Rassinier but are turned down by the Bourg-en-Bresse court.

November 2. In an appeal trial brought on by the same former resistance members who were turned down in the May trial, Rassinier is handed down a suspended 15-day prison sentence and ordered to pay a total of 100,000 francs. The Lyon appeal court also orders the seizure and destruction of all copies of *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*.

December. In his book *The Iron Curtain Over America*, John Beaty (1890-1961) disputes the Six Million figure, mainly based on figures presented by the World Almanac. [\[2\]](#)

Undated. Douglas Reed publishes his book *Far and Wide*, in which he devotes six pages to the Six Million figure. Reed demonstrates that there are significant incongruities to be found in the various estimates of the pre-war and post-war Jewish world population presented by almanacs and statistical sources. He remarks:

"In a matter where nothing is verifiable, one thing seems sure: that six million Jews were never even contained in German-occupied territories. Many Jews left Europe before the war began and the only large communities which remained were in Poland and Russia, countries from which trustworthy statistics are not to be expected. Many of those in Poland apparently welcomed the Communist invasion of 1939 and went into the Communist zone. A Jewish observer, Mr. Levine, returning to America from Russia in 1946, said. 'At the outset of the war, as we all know, Jews were among the first evacuated from the western regions threatened by the Hitlerite invaders and shipped to safety east of the Urals.' He said these privileged ones amounted to two millions\.

Yet this massive assertion about the six millions was used by politicians in the highest places, by prosecutors at Nuremberg, and habitually by mass-newspapers which in lesser matters would print no statement unverified! In truth nobody outside Political Zionism knows how many Jews the world contains, partly because Jewry has always included a section which avoids prominence in statistics, partly because the numbers in the Soviet areas cannot be ascertained, partly because Political Zionism has been able to obscure population-movements. Rabbi Elmer Berger wrote in 1946, of the Jews in Poland and Russia, that he did not know how many had survived 'and no one knows'. Since President Roosevelt's time track has been lost of the increase of Jewish population in America; good observers believe it now to approach eight millions." [\[3\]](#)

Historical context

In January, North Korean and Chinese forces capture Seoul. In March the trial of nuclear spies Ethel and Julius Rosenberg begins. In May the first thermonuclear weapon is tested by the United States.

1952

Background

On April 4, Israel demands reparations worth 3 billion dollars from West Germany in the Hague Tribunal. On June 15 The Diary of Anne Frank is first published in English.

Events

November. In an article for the Buenos Aires-based magazine *Der Weg*, Erwin F. Neubert disputes the Six Million figure.^[4]

Undated. Peter Kleist, a German nationalist of Russophile bent who during the war had served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, publishes the book *Auch du warst dabei!* (You too were there!) in which he devotes a subchapter to “The Final Solution”.^[5] Kleist disputes neither *Einsatzgruppen* mass shootings of Jews (while remarking that the Soviet partisans’ way of fighting “deliberately erased any distinction between fighting troops and civilians”) nor the existence of homicidal gas chambers (although he notes that *Wehrmacht* troops stationed in Lublin remained unaware of the mass gassings in Majdanek, and that “almost no information on these events reached Germany”). He states, on the other hand, that the victim figures claimed for the camps are grossly exaggerated, and that the Six Million figure cannot possibly be correct. According to Kleist’s calculations, the total number of perished Jews could at most have amounted to 1,277,212.

Historical context

In March general Batista re-takes power in Cuba, US ratifies peace treaty with Japan. In July East Germany forms the National People’s Army. In October martial law is declared in Kenya due to the Mau Mau uprising. In November the United States National Security Agency (NSA) is founded, Eisenhower is elected president.

1953

Background

Gerald Reitlinger’s *The Final Solution*, one of the first historiographical works on the Holocaust, is published by Beechhurst Press, New York.

Events

Undated. Hans Ulrich Rudel, at the time a leading member of the German Reich Party, publishes the war diary *Trotzdem* (“Nevertheless”, translated into English as *Stuka Pilot*) in which he expresses skepticism towards the concentration camp atrocity stories and denounces what he perceives as Allied hypocrisy:

“They refuse to believe me when I tell them that I have never even seen a concentration camp. I add that if excesses have been committed they are regrettable and reprehensible, and the real culprits should be punished. I point out that such cruelties have been perpetrated not only by our people, but by all peoples in every age. I remind them of the Boer War. Therefore these excesses must be judged by the same criterion. I cannot imagine that the mounds of corpses depicted in the photographs were taken in concentration camps. I tell them that we have seen such sights, not on film, but in fact, after the air attacks on Dresden and Hamburg and other cities when Allied four-engined bombers deluged them indiscriminately with phosphorus and high explosive bombs and countless women and children were massacred”.^[6]

Undated. The book *Advance to Barbarism* by F.J.P. Veale is published in the United States^[7], containing skepticism towards certain allegations advanced during IMT Nuremberg:

“Yet another discordant note was struck through the inability of the Soviet authorities to resist any opportunity to poke sly fun at their capitalist allies—for example, they solemnly adduced in evidence ‘a jar

of human soap,' alleged to have been made from the bodies of executed prisoners- a manifest gibe, in the worst possible taste, at the famous 'Corpse Factory Myth' put into circulation with the aid of forged documents by the British emotional engineers during the war 1914-1918". [8]

Veale also criticizes Allied hypocrisy concerning war crimes, pointing out that the expulsion of Germans from East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia, and the Sudetenland affected 15 million people, whereof 2 million are estimated to have been killed or died from cold and hunger.

Historical context

Beginning of January, President Truman announces the US development of a hydrogen bomb. In February USSR breaks diplomatic relations with Israel. On March 5 Stalin dies and is succeeded by Malenkov, later same month Khrushchev is selected First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. In July Lavrenti Beria is deposed as head of the NKVD. In August the USSR announces that it has the hydrogen bomb. CIA helps install Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi on Iranian throne. In September the first German prisoners of war return from the USSR to West Germany.

1954

Background

No Holocaust-related events of significance.

Events

May-June. Ludwig Paulin publishes the article "Die Lüge von den 238,000. Was geschah im Lager Dachau?" (The Lie of the 238,000. What happened in Camp Dachau?) in *Der Weg*, Vol. 8, No. 5-6, pp. 349-358. Paulin disputes the existence of a gas chamber at the camp and also argues that the Dachau cremation ovens did not have the capacity to incinerate the (at this time) alleged 238,000 victims.

July. Guido Heimann publishes the article "Die Lüge von den sechs Millionen" (The Lie of the Six Million) in *Der Weg*, Vol. 8, No. 7, pp. 479-487.

Maurice Bardèche spend three weeks in prison for his writings before being pardoned.

August. The pseudonym Warwick Hester publishes the article "Auf den Straßen der Wahrheit" (On the streets of truth) in *Der Weg*, Vol. 8, No. 8, pp. 572-578. According to Udo Walendy, who re-published the article in 1990 [9], the real name of its author was Stephen F. Pinter (possibly 1888-1985), an American lawyer who had been involved in the Dachau trial. The author begins by noting that none of the accused at Nuremberg had known about the alleged extermination of Jews, and that the eyewitness testimonies presented were full of mendacious statements. He also points out that no physical evidence for the so-called "gas vans" had been presented before the court, in spite of the claim that hundreds of thousands had been killed inside those vehicles. Pinter writes that he visited all the former camps in the western zone of occupation, but did not find any credible traces of gas chambers. He spoke with fourteen (unnamed) Jewish Majdanek witnesses, who reportedly between four eyes admitted to him that they had not observed any mass gassings. Pinter further spoke with some former (likewise unnamed) SS officers in Barcelona, Cairo and Rio de Janeiro and asked them about the alleged extermination. Five of them told him that it had happened, but that two rather than six million had been killed. At further inquiry, it turned out that four of them based their opinions on hearsay. One claimed to

have heard from Eichmann shortly before the end of the war that two million Jews had been killed by “special commandos”. The fifth SS man, who lived in Kairo, claimed to have partaken in a mass execution of 30,000 Jews at Crimea, but other sources maintained that the man had never been stationed there.

September. Eva Peron Basil’s article “La mentira de los seis millones” (The lie of the six millions) is published in *Der Weg*, Vol. 8, No. 9, pp. 604-605.

December 16. The Supreme Court of France has the Lyon court’s sentence against Rassinier annulled and the case is remitted to the court of Grenoble.

Undated. The book *The Swindle of the Six Million* is published privately in New York. Its author, Heinrich Malz, was a former Berlin police official who had worked under Ernst Kaltenbrunner and Werner Naumann.

Historical context

In late January the foreign ministers of US, UK, Soviet and France meet at the Berlin Conference. In late February, Gamal Abdel Nasser becomes premier of Egypt. In April Eisenhower gives his “domino theory” speech. Senator McCarthy begins hearings investigating US Army for being soft on Communism. May, French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam. In June CIA and United Fruits Company engineers military coup in Guatemala. In September USSR conducts its first nuclear test.

1955

Background

French director Alain Resnais’ Holocaust film *Nuit et Brouillard* (Night and Fog) is released.

Events

February. The second edition of Rassinier’s *Le Mensonge d’Ulysse* is published by Macon. This volume incorporates most of Rassinier’s 1949 book on his experience as a concentration camp inmate, *Le Passage de la ligne*.

Undated. John Baker White, a former Director of British Military Intelligence who later worked for the Foreign Office Political Intelligence Department and then the Political Warfare Executive, publishes his book *The Big Lie*. During the war White had formed a unit broadcasting propaganda to the German armed forces. As an example of what sort of propaganda was spread to the Germans, White mentions a rumor concocted about the fat used for cooking by the German army:

“Owing to the acute shortage of animal fats the Germans, like ourselves, had to use synthetic substitutes. One of our political warfare tasks was to spread distrust of their origins. As luck would have it, there came to our notice an order issued to all German factories to fit traps to drains to catch all grease and soap for recovery. This was elaborated quickly into a rumour that the grease recovered was used for making cooking fats. It was a particularly successful rumour and came back within six weeks via a Luftwaffe prisoner, plus a most unsavoury elaboration which had not entered our heads.” [\[10\]](#)

The implication is that British propaganda triggered rumor mongering that eventually developed into the infamous “Jewish soap” story.

Historical context

In January Pentagon announces plan to develop intercontinental ballistic missiles armed with nuclear weapons. In February Eisenhower sends first U.S. advisors to South Vietnam. In April Churchill resigns as Prime Minister and is succeeded by Anthony Eden. In May West Germany becomes (formally) a sovereign state. In July the Geneva summit is held between the US, USSR, UK and France. In late August the last Soviet forces leave Austria.

Commentary

Still five years after the end of the war, few books had appeared detailing the mass gassing allegations. The main theme of the Nazi atrocity literature was the general ill treatment of concentration camp inmates, regardless of nationality or ethnicity, rather than the supposed extermination of European Jewry. Dachau, Buchenwald and Bergen-Belsen were the names most commonly appearing in Western media, and Auschwitz had yet to step into the limelight of the gas chamber horror-show, as shown by Kleist's book ("Near Lublin is located the largest of these camps of terror, called Maidanek").

Seen in retrospect, the past often seems full of missed opportunities. One might like to think that more could have done, that certain things should have been followed up or that certain should have been scrutinized more closely. On the other hand, it's impossible to deny the immense importance of the pioneering work carried out by Paul Rassinier. No good house can be built without a foundation, and with *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*, Rassinier set the ball rolling in grand fashion.

Still, very little was written by revisionists on the technical feasibility of the alleged crimes – a most central issue, since historiography must always conform to hard evidence if it is to be called truthful and scientific. Ludwig Paulin's 1954 article on Dachau is a noteworthy exception. Here the atrocity allegations are confronted with the parameters of physical reality. Tall tales are weighed against technical and forensic evidence, or lack of such. It takes about 1 hour and 10 minutes to incinerate a corpse in a crematory oven, and therefore, if the number of oven muffles is known, one can calculate whether the ovens were sufficient or not for the alleged number of victims. The cremation of hundreds of thousands of corpses would inevitably result in a tremendous amount of ashes – where are those ashes? The fact is, however, that the pioneering revisionists had little to go on as far technical details about the alleged gas chambers and the disposal of the bodies of the alleged victims were concerned. It should therefore not surprise that the bulk of revisionist research from this era is related to documents, statistics and testimonies that were relatively easily accessible. As will be seen in the forthcoming installments of this chronicle, the emergence of Holocaust historiography, following the early works of Reitlinger and Poliakov, would be counterbalanced by a gradually more refined, systematic and thorough Holocaust revisionism.

Notes:

- [1] Quoted from the German edition; *Nürnberg oder die Falschmünzer*, Verlag Karl-Heinz Priester 1957, p. 99.

- [2] John Beaty, *The Iron Curtain Over America*, Wilkinson Publishing Company, Dallas 1951, pp. 134-136.
- [3] D. Reed, *Far and Wide*, Jonathan Cape, London 1951, pp. 308-309.
- [4] E.F. Neubert, "Bevölkerungs- und Wirtschaftsentwicklung Israels und der Diaspora", *Der Weg*, Vol. 6, No. 11, pp. 772-777.
- [5] P. Kleist, *Auch du warst dabei!*, Kurt Vowinkel, Heidelberg 1952, pp. 325-331.
- [6] Hans Ulrich Rudel, *Stuka Pilot*, Noontide Press, California 1990, p. 226.
- [7] An anonymous edition of the book (bearing the same title) was published already in 1948 by Thompson & Smith, London, under the nom de plume "A. Jurist". This publication was overlooked by the author (T.K.) during the preparation of the first part of this chronicle. The 1953 edition is expanded compared to the 1948 edition.
- [8] F.J.P. Veale, *Advance to Barbarism*, Nelson Publishing 1953, p. 192.
- [9] "Der Dr. Pinter-Bericht" (The Dr. Pinter Report), *Historische Tatsachen*, No. 43, pp. 20-23.
- [10] John Baker White, *The Big Lie*, Evans Brothers Ltd, London 1955, p. 85

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